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ABSTRACT

While recent research has examined the positive benefits students receive from participating in extracurricular activities, very few studies have concentrated on female adolescents and their participation in such activities. This study was conducted to investigate the effects of participation in extracurricular activities on the level of self-concept as perceived by female high school students. The Personal Attribute Inventory (PAI) was administered to 166 female high school students. Subjects also completed a checklist of extracurricular activities. The difference in degree of self-concept as measured by the PAI was compared to the degree of participation in school activities. The results revealed that 128 of the 166 students participated to some degree in extracurricular activities, with 38 students reporting no participation in any type of extracurricular activities. The number of activities that students participated in ranged from 0 to 10, with a mean of 2.102. A Pearson product moment correlation was computed and a correlation of -.292 was found to be significant at p .05. A t-test for independent samples indicated a significant difference (t=4.302 CV=1.960, p .05) between the means of the participation group and the nonparticipation group. These findings suggest that female adolescents involved in extracurricular activities had higher positive self-concepts than did female adolescents not involved in school activities. (Author/NB)

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The Effects of Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities on Female Adolescent Self-Concept

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CG 021671

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of participation in extra-curricular activities on the level of self-concept as perceived by female high school students. The Personal Attribute Inventory was administered to 166 female subjects along with a checklist of extra-curricular activities to determine the difference in degree of self-concept as compared to the degree of participation in school activities.

A Pearson product moment correlation was computed and a correlation of -.292 was found to be significant at $p < .05$. A t-test for independent samples indicated a significant difference, $t = 4.302 > CV = 1.960$, $p < .05$, between the means of the participation group and the nonparticipation group.

It was concluded that female adolescents involved in extra-curricular activities had higher positive self-concept than female adolescents not involved in school activities.

The Effects of Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities on Female Adolescent Self-Concept

INTRODUCTION

Background

Adolescence is a time in which the development of personal identity is of primary importance for the development of self-concept. In fact, Rogers (l961) suggested that a strong positive self-concept is the goal of the human being. Very few researchers would dispute the notion that having a positive self-concept is of benefit to an individual. A central question for educators is whether school activities have any substantial impact upon the student's psychological well-being. It has often been argued that raising a student's self-concept will result not only in positive self-worth, but also in better academic performance (Alawiya & Alawiya, 1984).

Schools provide a non-academic as well as an academic program for adolescents. By offering extra-curricular activities, schools provide for participation in activities that influence personality development and socialization. Society works on interpersonal relationships and it is these relationships that form the environment for adolescents moving toward maturity. Participation with others in various ways helps individuals to overcome feelings of isolation and further identifies one's

own uniqueness (Brennan, 1985). Furthermore, it can be said that participation in extra-curricular activities is considered by employers and selective colleges to be evidence of social adjustment or of being "well rounded" (Hanks, Eckland, 1976).

Recently, researchers have been studying the positive benefits students receive in participating in extra-curricular activities and most agree that positive results occur from participation in extra-curricular activities. However, very few studies have concentrated on female adolescents. The scarcity of relevant empirical research, especially in the area of the immediate effects of extra-curricular participation on female self-concept suggested a need for further study in this area.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of participation in extra-curricular activities on self-concept as perceived by female high school students.

Statement of the Hypothesis

Female adolescents involved in extra-curricular activities show higher self-concept than female adolescents not involved in school activities.

Significance of the Problem

The significance of this study was to determine if a relationship

between participation in extra-curricular activities and the level of self-concept did, in fact, exist. If a relationship did exist, then there would be further argument for providing activities and encouraging female students to participate.

Definition of Terms

Extra-Curricular Activities- meant sponsored activities outside the regular school hours and not part of the official school curriculum, but excepted as part of the educational program. Such activities included in this category were: sports, clubs, and organized student committees.

Adolescent- in this study referred to female students between the ages of 14 - 18 years old who attended Kenai Central High School.

Self-Concept- The evaluation that the students made with regard to themselves upon choosing from a list of positive and negative descriptors. A large number of negative choices implied low self dissatisfaction.

Limitations and Assumptions

Data collection on a small sample size from a single high school made the results specific to one school and limited generalizability to large schools in different settings. Another major limitation of the causal-comparative method was the assumption that both groups were

similar before participation in school activities.

Review of the Literature

A positive self-image may be the most important component that a child can possess in order to grow into a healthy and happy individual. Sound self-concept involves a certain amount of self-love, which forms a basis for sharing love with others. The relationship between parent and child lays the foundation for self-regard and through these early interactions, the child learns about love and gains a sense of confidence that will continue to grow if his or her interactions are favorable.

Self-concept has been identified as a complex construct composed of four subsets: categorization, evaluation, the comparative and the affective (Scheirer & Kraut,1979). The affective subset, known as self-esteem, is found to be in direct relation to how people think others perceive them. In order to achieve self-esteem, an individual must first develop a positive self-concept (Lefrancois, 1977). If the child is granted the provisions of freedom to explore, make choices, and interact with others then the self-concept will be allowed to unfold and develop in positive ways.

Phillips (1969) stated that the psychological self is built mostly out of the people around it. Individuals are dependent on other people for feedback concerning their self-image. Indeed, the primary task of the

adolescent is to achieve intimacy and closeness to one's self and others while overcoming a feeling of isolation (Brennan,1985). This process involves exploration and participation with others in various ways so that the adolescent can identify his or her own unique self. G. H. Mead (as cited in Strauss,1964) contended that the self that adults eventually become is a conglomerate of the way they think others in their lives perceive them. A healthy self-concept is a significant variable in individual productive functioning since persons with leadership qualities find their self-image enhanced as these qualities are tapped by others. Kelly (as cited in Phillips, 1969) stated that, "one can observe students attempting to assuage this loneliness by the formation of clubs, cliques and other small groups to which they may belong" (p.33). Lefrancois (1977) suggested that a child's need for acceptance and approval is satisfied mostly by the peer group.

Schools provide many opportunities for peer group interaction during adolescence. Values, aspirations and self-esteem can be influenced in a variety of ways. American schools provide an academic and usually, a nonacademic program for adolescents. It is through the pattern of extra-curricular activities that schools allow or disallow, facilitate or inhibit individual personalities. And it is by the pattern of tangible and intangible rewards provided in participation, that schools influence

personality development and socialization (Holland and Andre,1987).

The view one takes about extra-curricular activities depends on the values and goals one has toward schools. It is possible that the values and goals held by a researcher can influence the interpretation of the results of an investigation. For instance, in one well known study on the role of extra-curricular activities, Coleman (as cited in Snyder and Spreitzer, 1977) argued that the emphasis on extra-curricular activities tends to be antithetical to educational pursuits. However, more recent evidence (e.g., Feltz and Weiss ,1984) suggests that the extra-curricular program is supportive rather than detrimental to educational achievement. Feltz and Weiss (1984) found that students who participated the most in extra-curricular activities were better able to manage their time and achieve higher levels of performance in several different roles simultaneously.

Schools serve as a major component in socializing adolescents and helping them to accomplish the developmental task of becoming a self-governing adult (Holland and Andre,1987). A number of studies have been conducted on the effects of participation in extra-curricular activities as a vehicle toward this goal. Based on research that has focused on the dependent variable of self-concept and the subset self-esteem, one can assume that there is a relationship between

participation in extra-curricular activities and a positive self-image. Brennan (1985) found that student participation increased self-esteem such that individuals felt more comfortable not only with others, but with themselves as well. The statement that increasing interpersonal interactions in individuals may lead to increased self-esteem is consistent with Rosenberg's (as cited in Morgan,1981) findings. He indicated from his investigation that people with positive self-esteem were the most likely to participate in extra-curricular activities. However, Morgan (1981) was unable to obtain the same results in a study conducted with summer quarter freshman.

The majority of studies on the relationship between extra-curricular participation, level of self-esteem and self-concept have included a predominance of male subjects as opposed to female subjects. In two earlier studies in which females were included, Phillips (1969) found a significant positive relationship between participation by boys in extra-curricular activities and scores on a self-concept measure. No significant relationship was found for girls between participation in any activity and scores on a self-concept scale. In recent studies in the area of sports, however, Phillip's findings did not hold true (e.g.,Feltz and Weiss,1984; Snyder and Kivlin, 1975). Comparisons of women athletes and nonathletes on psychological

well-being showed more positive self-attitudes by the athletes. Sugar (1967) also stated in his work that girls who were physically active tended to feel better about their bodies and showed higher levels of self-esteem. These findings dispute the stereotype ideas portraying women as masculine or confused over conflicting role expectations (e.g.,Griffin,1973).

The physiological and psychological changes that occur during adolescents produce a multitude of major role-transitions that affect the student's self-concept in either a positive or negative way. Girls, particularly, are more vulnerable if they have not succeeded in earlier transitions from one environment to another. Various studies (e.g.,Simmons, R., Blyth, D., & Bush, D.,1977; Simmons, R., Bulcroft, R., Blyth, D., & Bush,D.,1979) identified early adolescence as a critical period for girls. Based on scores on different social-psychological scales, girls exhibited greater instability of self-concept and lower global self-esteem. Simmons et al. (1979) stated that "when the entrance into adolescence is sudden and discontinuous, girls appear to have greater difficulty in adjustment"(p.12).

Recent studies have found that self-concept increases with age. In a study conducted by Piers and Harris (1964) it was found that the self-concepts of tenth graders were significantly higher than those of

sixth graders. With subjects from a Finnish baseball team, Kalliopuska (1987) demonstrated that self-esteem increased with the number of years of actual playing. If one accepts the idea that self-concept increases with age and is acquired through interaction, then girls participating in the senior high school social environment would have more of a chance to establish their identity and clarify their role in society. Bardwick (as cited in Brennan,1985) found in a study he conducted that success in affiliative relationships was a major source of self-esteem in women.

More research on female participation and effects on self-concept is definitely needed in order to distinguish how schools can better contribute to the development of the "self." On the basis of the review of literature, it is valid to consider that a positive relationship between extra-curricular activities and self-image exists.

Method

Subjects

The data for this study was obtained in February, 1989 from the student body of Kenai Central High School in Kenai, Alaska. The city, school and sample population sizes are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Data

Population Size

City	School (males)	School (females)	Sample (females)
6500	259	229	166

The population consisted of mostly Caucasian with a minority of Alaskan natives. A total of 166 females in grades 9-12 responded to the instruments. This sample represented 72% of the 229 female students in the population.

Instruments

The Personal Attribute Inventory (PAI) was the instrument used to determine the subjects' level of self-concept. The inventory contains 50 positive and 50 negative adjectives that were selected from items on Gough's (1952) Adjective Checklist. The inventory was also chosen for its brevity and as an effective measure of self-concept. The PAI was established by Parish, Eads and Adams (1977) by selecting a subset of adjectives from those on the Adjective Checklist. Kappes and Parish (1979) found a correlation between the Personal Attribute Inventory and the self-concept scale on the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire. A further study (Kappes, 1980) demonstrated

concurrent validity as a self-concept scale with significant relationships to state-trait anxiety and symptoms frequency.

A checklist of activities offered at Kenai Central High School was included on the back of the Personal Attribute Inventory. Activities were separated into two groups consisting of athletic activities and nonathletic activities. A copy of the instrument is located in the Appendix.

Design

This causal-comparative study investigated the effect of participation in extra-curricular activities on female adolescent self-concept. A test of the dependent variable was administered to the subjects and the difference in degree of self-concept was compared to the degree of participation in school activities. Lack of randomization is a major threat to this type of design. Since already formed groups were used, there remained the possibility that some other variable besides the independent variable caused the difference in self-concept. To minimize this problem, a large sample was selected in order to represent all subgroups within the defined population.

Procedure

The school principal of Kenai Central High School was contacted regarding participation in the study and given a copy of the research

plan as well as copies of the instruments to be used. After obtaining consent, a meeting was held to explain the purpose of the study to the chairperson of the English department and one other teacher. Since all students are required to take English, it was decided to administer the instrument during the English classes in order to obtain a large cross section of the population. Copies of the Personal Attribute Inventory and the activities checklist were distributed to all English teachers with instructions on how and when to administer the instruments.

The Personal Attribute Inventory was administered at the beginning of the assigned classes. Students were requested to select 30 adjectives from an alphabetical list of 100 possible choices. Instructions were typed at the top of the inventory and they were asked to indicate their selection by placing a number from 1-30 in the space next to the word. The numbers were not used to rank the adjectives but were only used to help the students select exactly 30 choices. Students were instructed that there were no right or wrong answers and therefore they should respond as honestly as possible. In addition to the inventory, subjects also received a list of school activities and were asked to check all the activities in which they participated in. Approximate time involved, including explanation and administration of the instrument, was 15 minutes.

On the day of testing, many students were participating in a choir program and were excused from their regular classes. Some teachers decided to administer the instruments at another time in order to include the choir group. Because of this unforeseen event, the overall results may have been affected. Some students knew about the inventory before they had a chance to complete it. Although this event kept a few students from participating in the study, the experimenter was able to obtain a large percentage of the student population.

Scores from the Personal Attribute Inventory were tallied by adding the number of negative adjectives checked by each subject. The higher the number of negative adjectives chosen, the lower the level of self-concept. Three instruments had to be pro-rated because the subjects did not choose exactly 30 adjectives. Involvement in extra-curricular activities was determined by adding the number of activities listed on the checklist.

Results

At Kenai Central High School,128 of the 166 subjects participated to some degree in extra-curricular activities. There were 38 subjects who did not participate in any type of extra-curricular activities. The number of activities that subjects participated in ranged from 0-10 with a mean or average of 2.102.

The data showed that 32 girls, approximately 19%, had a high level of negative self-concept scores(10+), which meant that 81% of the subjects had lower negative self-concept scores. In fact, 89 girls had scores between 0-4; a range that displayed a fairly healthy self-concept. The remaining 45 subjects had scores between 5-9, showing a gradual increase toward negative self-concept, but still within the range of healthy with the possibility of some problems. The mean or average score was 5.25. Table 2 presents the frequency of participation in relation to the number of subjects in each of the following categories: high negative self-concept scores(10+), medium negative self-concept scores(5-9) and low negative self-concept scores(0-4).

Table 2
Number of Subjects with Negative Self-Concept Scores and Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Number of Activities	Number of High Self-Concept Scores(10+)	Number of Med. Negative Self-Concept Scores(5-9)	Number of low Negative Self-Concept Scores(0-4)
0	14	13	10
1	7	10	23
2	6	9	20
3	4	5	12
4		5	10
5		2	8
6	1	1	2
7			1
8			1
9			
10			2
	32	45	89 = 166

The table shows that the high negative self-concept subjects(10+) have higher scores in relation to the least amount of participation. For example, 14 out of 32 subjects within this group, 44 percent, did not participate in any school activity.

The original hypothesis stated that female adolescents involved in extra-curricular activities would have higher self-concept than female adolescents not involved in school activities. In order to detect if the hypothesis could be supported, a Pearson product moment correlation was computed to determine if a relationship existed between negative self-concept scores and participation. A correlation of -.292 was found

to be significant at the .05 level. Table 3 depicts the mean and standard deviation of the two variables as well as the correlation and the probability level. The results did not explain the relationship, but only indicated that a slight relationship did, in fact, exist.

Table 3
Correlation Between Negative Self-Concept and Participation

Variables	Cases	Mean	SD	r	P
Negative Self-Concept	166	5.253	5.076	-.292	.0003*
Participation	166	2.102	2.017		

*significant at .05 level.
df =164
CV =.1946

Next, a t-test for independent samples was done to compare the mean scores- one from the participation group, the other from the nonparticipation group. The t-test indicated a significant difference between means, t = 4.302, CV = 1.960. Thus, the original hypothesis was again supported.

Table 4

t-test for the participation group and the nonparticipation group for negative self-concept scores

Instrument	Groups					
Personal	Participation(n=128)		Nonparticipation(n=38)			
Attribute	M	SD	M	SD	t	P*
Inventory	4.375	4.429	8.211	5.991	4.302	.0001

Note: maximum Score = 30.
*significant at .05 level.
df = 164
ÇV = 1.960

Discussion

The data collected from this study indicated that participation in extra-curricular activities at Kenai Central High School was significantly related to self-concept in female adolescents. The results were not in agreement with the Phillips (1969) study, where no significant relationship was found for girls between participation in any activity and scores on a self-concept scale. The findings were, however, consistent with recent studies that showed more positive self-attitudes among female athletes when compared to female nonathletes (e.g., Feltz and Weiss, 1984; Snyder and Kivlin, 1975).

Based on the results, it is tempting to conclude that a cause-effect relationship exists, but the problem of self-selection by students into extra-curricular activities rather than random assignment

does not justify this conclusion. The possibility exists that students who already possess higher self-concept elect to participate in activities. In this case, the independent and dependent variables would be reversed, making participation in activities dependent upon self-concept. Indeed, a relationship does seem to exist between the two variables. And, if positive self-concept is enhanced by participation then the instrument used in this study did, in fact, measure the effect.

The development of self-concept can be viewed as a process which takes place through social interaction and affiliative relationships. Just what activities are most conducive to building self-concept, especially in females, is not clear from this research. Perhaps a longitudinal study, starting with ninth grade females and ending with their graduation, could investigate the effects of participation on their self-concept and identify what activities contributed the most toward increasing their self-image.

The results, conclusions, and recommendations in the present study can only apply to the population of students at a single, small high school. In order to make generalizations to other schools, further research using large samples of students from different populations, in differing geographic locations is warranted.

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Appendix

Personal Attribute Inventory

Please indicate whether you are male or female by placing M or F in the space ____. Read through the list of adjectives and select exactly 30 words that describe you best. Indicate your selection by placing number 1-30 in the space next to the word.

____active
____affectionate
____alert
____appreciative
____awkward
____bitter
____calm
____careless
____cheerful
____clear-thinking
____complaining
____conceited
____confident
____confused
____conscientious
____cooperative
____cowardly
____cruel
____deceitful
____dependable
____despondent
____determined
____energetic
____fairminded
____fickle
____foolish
____foresighted
____forgetful
____gloomy
____good-natured
____greedy
____handsome
____hasty
____healthy
____helpful
____hostile
____humorous
____imaginative
____impatient
____industrious
____initiative
____intolerant
____inventive
____irresponsible
____irritable
____jolly
____kind
____mannerly
____masculine
____nagging
____natural
____obnoxious
____organized
____original
____patient
____pleasant
____poised
____prejudiced
____progressive
____quarrelsome
____queer
____quitting
____rational
____rattlebrained
____relaxed
____resentful
____resourceful
____rude
____self-centered
____self-confident
____self-controlled
____self-pitying
____selfish
____shallow
____shiftless
____show-off
____sincere
____slipshod
____snobbish
____spineless
____stable
____steady
____stingy
____strong
____sulky
____sympathetic
____tactful
____tactless
____thankless
____tolerant
____touchy
____trusting
____undependable
____understanding
____unfriendly
____unintelligent
____unkind
____warm
____weak
____whiny

Activity checklist

Check only the activities that you are participating in this school year.

Athletics

____cross-country
____swimming-diving
____football
____basketball
____wrestling
____volleyball
____track & field
____hockey
____gymnastics
____other

Non-Athletic Activities

____band
____choir
____drill team
____drama
____cheerleading
____student council
____class officer
____debate group

Other school clubs or school organizations not mentioned above.

_____

_____

_____